SPECIAL REPORT

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

PROJECT MEGIDDO

The attached analysis, entitled *PROJECT MEGIDDO*, is an FBI strategic assessment of the potential for domestic terrorism in the United States undertaken in anticipation of or response to the arrival of the new millennium.

This reformatted version is taken from the original on the FBI web site at http://www.fbi.gov/library/megiddo/publicmegiddo.pdf which requires the Adobe Acrobat reader to read it.

See the associated Commentary by Jon Roland.

PROJECT MEGIDDO

Table of Contents:

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY …… 3

II. INTRODUCTION ……... 6

When Does the New Millennium Begin?……... 7

Blueprint for Action: The Turner Diaries……...… 8

Interpretations of The Bible…… 8

Apocalyptic Religious Beliefs …….. 10

The New World Order Conspiracy Theory and the……...11
Year 2000 Computer Bug

Gun Control Laws …… 12

III. CHRISTIAN IDENTITY ……... 14

IV. WHITE SUPREMACY …….. 18

V. MILITIAS …… 21

VI. BLACK HEBREW ISRAELITES ……..…… 23

VII. APOCALYPTIC CULTS …….……. 26

VIII. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JERUSALEM …… 30

IX. CONCLUSION …….. 32

For over four thousand years, MEGIDDO, a hill in northern Israel, has been the site of many battles. Ancient cities were established there to serve as a fortress on the plain of Jezreel to guard a mountain pass. As Megiddo was built and rebuilt, one city upon the other, a mound or hill was formed. The Hebrew word "Armageddon" means "hill of Megiddo." In English, the word has come to represent battle itself.

The last book in the New Testament of the Bible designates Armageddon as the assembly point in the apocalyptic setting of God's final and conclusive battle against evil. The name "Megiddo" is an apt title for a project that analyzes those who believe the year 2000 will usher in the end of the world and who are willing to perpetrate acts of violence to bring that end about.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The year 2000 is being discussed and debated at all levels of society. Most of the discussions regarding this issue revolve around the topic of technology and our society's overwhelming dependence on the multitude of computers and computer chips which make our world run smoothly. However, the upcoming millennium also holds important implications beyond the issue of computer technology. Many extremist individuals and groups place some significance on the next millennium, and as such it will present challenges to law enforcement at many levels. The significance is based primarily upon either religious beliefs relating to the Apocalypse or political beliefs relating to the New World Order (NWO) conspiracy theory. The challenge is how well law enforcement will prepare and respond.

The following report, entitled "Project Megiddo," is intended to analyze the potential for extremist criminal activity in the United States by individuals or domestic extremist groups who profess an apocalyptic view of the millennium or attach special significance to the year 2000. The purpose behind this assessment is to provide law enforcement agencies with a clear picture of potential extremism motivated by the next millennium. The report does not contain information on domestic terrorist groups whose actions are not influenced by the year 2000.

There are numerous difficulties involved in providing a thorough analysis of domestic security threats catalyzed by the new millennium. Quite simply, the very nature of the current domestic terrorism threat places severe limitations on effective intelligence gathering and evaluation. Ideological and philosophical belief systems which attach importance, and possibly violence, to the millennium have been well-articulated. From a law enforcement perspective, the problem therefore is not a lack of understanding of motivating ideologies: The fundamental problem is that the traditional focal point for counter terrorism analysis – the terrorist group – is not always well-defined or relevant in the current environment.

The general trend in domestic extremism is the terrorist’s disavowal of traditional, hierarchical, and structured terrorist organizations. Even well-established militias, which tend to organize along military lines with central control, are characterized by factionalism and disunity.

While several “professional” terrorist groups still exist and present a continued threat to domestic security, the overwhelming majority of extremist groups in the United States have adopted a fragmented, leaderless structure where individuals or small groups act with autonomy. Clearly, the worst act of domestic terrorism in United States history was perpetrated by merely two individuals: Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols. In many cases, extremists of this sort are extremely difficult to identify until after an incident has occurred. Thus, analysis of domestic extremism in which the group serves as the focal point of evaluation has obvious limitations.

The Project Megiddo intelligence initiative has identified very few indications of specific threats to domestic security. Given the present nature of domestic extremism, this is to be expected. However, this is a function of the limitations of the group-oriented model of counter terrorism analysis and should not be taken necessarily as reflective of a minor or trivial domestic threat. Without question, this initiative has revealed indicators of potential violent activity on the part of extremists in this country. Militias, adherents of racist belief systems such as Christian Identity and Odinism, and other radical domestic extremists are clearly focusing on the millennium as a time of action. Certain individuals from these various perspectives are acquiring weapons, storing food and clothing, raising funds through fraudulent means, procuring safe houses, preparing compounds, surveying potential targets, and recruiting new converts.

These and other indicators are not taking place in a vacuum, nor are they random or arbitrary. In the final analysis, while making specific predictions is extremely difficult, acts of violence in commemoration of the millennium are just as likely to occur as not. In the absence of intelligence that the more established and organized terrorist groups are planning millennial violence as an organizational strategy, violence is most likely to be perpetrated by radical fringe members of established groups. For example, while Aryan Nations leader Richard Butler publicly frowns on proactive violence, adherents of his religion or individual members of his organization may commit acts of violence autonomously.

Potential cult-related violence presents additional challenges to law enforcement. The potential for violence on behalf of members of biblically-driven cults is determined almost exclusively by the whims of the cult leader. Therefore, effective intelligence and analysis of such cults requires an extensive understanding of the cult leader. Cult members generally act to serve and please the cult leader rather than accomplish an ideological objective. Almost universally, cult leaders are viewed as messianic in the eyes of their followers. Also, the cult leader’s prophecies, preaching’s, orders, and objectives are subject to indiscriminate change. Thus, while analysis of publicly stated goals and objectives of cults may provide hints about their behavior and intentions, it is just as likely to be uninformed or, at worst, misleading. Much more valuable is a thorough examination of the cult leader, his position of power over his followers, and an awareness of the responding behavior and activity of the cult. Sudden changes in activity – for example, less time spent on “Bible study” and more time spent on “physical training” – indicate that the cult may be preparing for some type of action.

The millennium holds special significance for many, and as this pivotal point in time approaches, the impetus for the initiation of violence becomes more acute.

1 U.S. Congress, Senate, Special Committee on the Year 2000 Technology Problem, Investigating the Impact of the Year 2000 Problem, February 24, 1996, pp. 1-6.
2 Ibid, p. 3.
3 Ibid. p. 5.

Several religiously motivated groups envision a quick, fiery ending in an apocalyptic battle. Others may initiate a sustained campaign of terrorism in the United States to prevent the NWO. Armed with the urgency of the millennium as a motivating factor, new clandestine groups may conceivably form to engage in violence toward the U.S. Government or its citizens.

Most importantly, this analysis clearly shows that perceptions matter. The perceptions of the leaders and followers of extremist organizations will contribute much toward the ultimate course of action they choose. For example, in-depth analysis of Y2K compliancy on the part of various key sectors that rely on computers has determined that, despite a generally positive outlook for overall compliance, there will be problem industries and minor difficulties and inconveniences.[1] If they occur, these inconveniences are likely to cause varying responses by the extreme fringes. Members of various militia groups, for example, have identified potentially massive power failures as an indication of a United Nations-directed NWO takeover. While experts have indicated that only minor brownouts will occur, various militias are likely to perceive such minor brownouts as indicative of a larger conspiracy.[2]

The Senate Special Committee on the Year 2000 Technology Problem has stated that some state and local governments could be unprepared, including the inability to provide benefits payments.[3] This could have a significant impact in major urban areas, resulting in the possibility for civil unrest. Violent white supremacists are likely to view such unrest as an affirmation of a racist, hate-filled world view. Likewise, militia members who predict the implementation of martial law in response to a Y2K computer failure would become all the more fearful.

[4] Cliff Linedecker, Prophecies for the New Millennium (Lantana, FL: Micromags, 1999), p. 3-4.

II. INTRODUCTION

Are we already living on the precipice of the Apocalypse – the chaotic final period of warfare between the forces of good and evil signaling the second coming of Christ, as forecast in the New Testament's Book of Revelation? Or, will life on earth continue for another 1,000 years, allowing humans to eliminate disease and solve the mysteries of the aging process so they can live as long as Methuselah, colonize space, commune with extraterrestrials, unravel the secrets of teleportation, and usher in a golden age of peace and productivity? [4]

At first glance, some of the predictions compiled in Prophecies for the New Millennium that claim to foretell how the millennium will affect the United States seem benign. In fact, those predictions capture some of the countless ways that domestic terrorists view how the millennium will affect the world. The threat posed by extremists as a result of perceived events associated with the Year 2000 (Y2K) is very real.

Numerous religious extremists claim that a race war will soon begin, and have taken steps to become martyrs in their predicted battle between good and evil. Three recent incidents committed by suspects who adhere to ideologies that emphasize millennial related violence illustrate those beliefs: Buford O. Furrow, Jr., the man charged in the August 1999 shootings at a Los Angeles area Jewish day care center, told authorities "its time for America to wake and kill the jews"; Ben Smith, who committed suicide after shooting at minorities in Indiana and Illinois, killing two and injuring ten, over the July 4, 1999 weekend, was found to have literature in his home that indicated the year 2000 would be the start of the killing of minorities; and John William King, the man convicted in the dragging death of James Byrd, Jr., a black man in Jasper, Texas, believed that his actions would help to initiate a race war. Each of these men believed in the imminence of a racial holy war.

Meanwhile, for members of the militia movement the new millennium has a political overtone rather than a religious one. It is their belief that the United Nations has created a secret plan, known as the New World Order (NWO), to conquer the world beginning in 2000. The NWO will be set in motion by the Y2K computer crisis.

Religious motivation and the NWO conspiracy theory are the two driving forces behind the potential for millennial violence. As the end of the millennium draws near, biblical prophecy and political philosophy may merge into acts of violence by the more extreme members of domestic terrorist groups that are motivated, in part, by religion. The volatile mix of apocalyptic religions and NWO conspiracy theories may produce violent acts aimed at precipitating the end of the world as prophesied in the Bible.

When and how Christ's second coming will occur is a critical point in the ideology of those motivated by extremist religious beliefs about the millennium. There is no consensus within Christianity regarding the specific date that the Apocalypse will occur.

However, within many right-wing religious groups there is a uniform belief that the Apocalypse is approaching. Some of these same groups also point to a variety of non-religious indicators such as gun control, the Y2K computer problem, the NWO, the banking system, and a host of other "signs" that the Apocalypse is near. Almost uniformly, the belief among right-wing religious extremists is that the federal government is an arm of Satan. Therefore, the millennium will bring about a battle between Christian martyrs and the government. At the core of this volatile mix is the belief of apocalyptic religions and cults that the battle against Satan, as prophesied in the Book of Revelation, will begin in 2000.

An example of the confrontational nature and belief system of religiously motivated suspects illustrates the unique challenges that law enforcement faces when dealing with a fatalist/martyr philosophy. It also illustrates the domino effect that may occur after such a confrontation. Gordon Kahl, an adherent to the anti-government/racist Christian Identity religion, escaped after a 1983 shootout with police that left two Deputy U.S. Marshals dead. He was later killed during a subsequent shootout with the FBI and others that also left a county sheriff dead.

In response to the killing of Kahl, Bob Mathews, a believer in the racist Odinist ideology, founded The Order. After The Order committed numerous crimes, its members were eventually tracked down. Mathews escaped after engaging in a gun battle and later wrote, "Why are so many men so eager to destroy their own kind for the benefit of the Jews and the mongrels? I see three FBI agents hiding behind some trees . . . I could have easily killed them . . . They look like good racial stock yet all their talents are given to a government which is openly trying to mongrelize the very race these agents are part of . . . I have been a good soldier, a fearless warrior. I will die with honor and join my brothers in [heaven]." Exemplifying his beliefs as a martyr, Mathews later burned to death in an armed standoff with the FBI.

In light of the enormous amount of millennial rhetoric, the FBI sought to analyze a number of variables that have the potential to spark violent acts perpetrated by domestic terrorists. Religious beliefs, the Y2K computer problem, and gun control laws all have the potential to become catalysts for such terrorism. The following elements are essential to understanding the phenomenon of domestic terrorism related to the millennium:

When Does the New Millennium Begin?

As the nation and the world prepare to celebrate the arrival of the new millennium, a debate has arisen as to the correct date for its beginning. Although the true starting point of the next millennium is January 1, 2001, as established by the U.S. Naval Observatory in Washington, D.C., our nation's official time keeper, many will celebrate January 1, 2000, as the start of the millennium. The majority of domestic terrorists, like the general public, place a greater significance on January 1, 2000.

Blueprint for Action: The Turner Diaries

5 Charles Bosworth Jr., "Illinois Man Sought Start of Race War," St. Louis Post-Dispatch, March 15, 1998.
6 Paul Duggan, "From Beloved Son to Murder Suspect," The Washington Post, February 16, 1999.

Many right-wing extremists are inspired by The Turner Diaries, a book written by William Pierce (under the pseudonym Andrew Macdonald), the leader of the white supremacist group National Alliance. The book details a violent overthrow of the federal government by white supremacists and also describes a brutal race war that is to take place simultaneously. To date, several groups or individuals have been inspired by this book:

X At the time of his arrest, Timothy McVeigh, the man responsible for the Oklahoma City bombing, had a copy of The Turner Diaries in his possession. McVeigh's action against the Murrah Federal Building was strikingly similar to an event described in the book where the fictional terrorist group blows up FBI Headquarters.

X The Order, an early 1980s terrorist cell involved in murder, robberies, and counterfeiting, was motivated by the book's scenarios for a race war. The group murdered Alan Berg, a Jewish talk show host, and engaged in other acts of violence in order to hasten the race war described in the book. The Order's efforts later inspired another group, The New Order, which planned to commit similar crimes in an effort to start a race war that would lead to a violent revolution.[5]

X Most recently, The Turner Diaries provided inspiration to John William King, the man convicted for dragging a black man to his death in Jasper, Texas. As King shackled James Byrd's legs to the back of his truck he was reported to say, "We're going to start the Turner Diaries early."[6]

During the year 2000 and beyond, The Turner Diaries will be an inspiration for right-wing terrorist groups to act because it outlines both a revolutionary takeover of the government and a race war. These elements of the book appeal to a majority of right-wing extremists because it is their belief that one or both events will coincide with Y2K.

Interpretations of the Bible

Religiously based domestic terrorists use the New Testament's Book of Revelation – the prophecy of the endtime – for the foundation of their belief in the Apocalypse. Religious extremists interpret the symbolism portrayed in the Book of Revelation and mold it to predict that the endtime is now and that the Apocalypse is near. To understand many religious extremists, it is crucial to know the origin of the Book of Revelation and the meanings of its words, numbers and characters.

7 While he never claimed to be the book's author, the Apostle John was identified as such by several of the early church Fathers. Authorship is generally ascribed to him today.

8 This interpretation of the Book of Revelation is according to the Catholic Bible and a Catholic scholar that was consulted on the matter. However, there are other varying interpretations of the Book of Revelation within Christianity.

9 All symbolism was taken from The Catholic Bible; New American Bible

The Book of Revelation was written by a man named “John” who was exiled by the Roman government to a penal colony – the island of Patmos – because of his beliefs in Christ.[7]

While on the island, he experienced a series of visions, described in the Book of Revelation. The writing in the Book of Revelation is addressed to churches who were at the time experiencing or were threatened by persecution from Rome because they were not following the government. For this reason, some believe the Book of Revelation was written in code language, much of which was taken from other parts of the Bible.

One interpretation describing the essence of the message contained in Revelation is that God will overcome Christianity’s enemies (Roman Government/Satan) and that the persecuted communities should persevere.[8] For right-wing groups who believe they are being persecuted by the satanic government of the United States, the Book of Revelation's message fits perfectly into their world view. This world view, in combination with a literal interpretation of the Book of Revelation, is reflected in extremist ideology, violent acts, and literature. For this reason, it is imperative to know the meaning of some of the “**code words**” frequently used:

- X Four (4) signifies the world.
- X Six (6) signifies imperfection.
- X Seven (7) is the totality of perfection or fullness and completeness.
- X Twelve (12) represents the twelve tribes of Israel or the 12 apostles.
- X One-thousand (1000) signifies immensity.
- X The color white symbolizes power and can also represent victory, joy and resurrection.
- X The color red symbolizes a bloody war.
- X The color black symbolizes famine.
- X A rider on a pale green horse is a symbol of Death itself.
- X “Babylon” is the satanic Roman Government, now used to describe the U.S. government.[9]

Black Hebrew Israelites, a black supremacist group, typify the use of numerology from the Book of Revelation. They believe group members will comprise the 144,000 people who are saved by God in the second coming that is outlined in Revelation (7:1-17). In the Book of Revelation, John is shown a vision of 144,000 martyrs who have survived and did not submit to Satan. This number is derived from the assertion that the twelve tribes of Israel consisted of 12,000 people each.

10 Kerry Noble, Tabernacle of Hate: Why they Bombed Oklahoma City (Prescott, Ontario, Canada: Voyageur Publishing, 1998).
11 Robert Draper, "Happy Doomsday," Texas Monthly, July 1997, p.74; Evan Moore, "A House Divided: Tensions divide Abilene-area cult," The Houston Chronicle, March 24, 1996.
12 Evan Moore, "A House Divided: Tensions divide Abilene-area cult," The Houston Chronicle, March 24, 1996.
13 John K. Wiley, "Profile of attack suspect is familiar and frightening," The Miami Herald, August 12, 1999.

Groups not only use the Bible to interpret the endtimes, but use it to justify their ideology. Phineas Priests, an amorphous group of Christian Identity adherents, base their entire ideology on Chapter 25 of the Book of Numbers. The passage depicts a scene where Phineas kills an Israelite who was having relations with a Midianite woman and God then granted Phineas and all of his descendants a pledge of everlasting priesthood. Modern day followers of the Phineas Priest ideology believe themselves to be the linear descendants of Phineas and this passage gives them biblical justification to punish those who transgress God's laws. Therefore, the group is ardently opposed to race mixing and strongly believes in racial separation. The number 25 is often used as a symbol of the group.

Apocalyptic Religious Beliefs

To understand the mind set of why religious extremists would actively seek to engage in violent confrontations with law enforcement, the most common extremist ideologies must be understood. Under these ideologies, many extremists view themselves as religious martyrs who have a duty to initiate or take part in the coming battles against Satan. Domestic terrorist groups who place religious significance on the millennium believe the federal government will act as an arm of Satan in the final battle. By extension, the FBI is viewed as acting on Satan's behalf.

The philosophy behind targeting the federal government or entities perceived to be associated with it is succinctly described by Kerry Noble, a former right-wing extremist. He says the right-wing "envision[s] a dark and gloomy endtime scenario, where some Antichrist makes war against Christians."[10] The House of Yahweh, a Texas based religious group whose leaders are former members of the tax protesting Posse Comitatus, is typical: Hawkins (the leader) has interpreted biblical scripture that the Israeli Peace Accord signed on October 13, 1993, has started a 7-year period of tribulation which will end on October 14, 2000, with the return of the Yeshua (the Messiah).[11] He also has interpreted that the FBI will be the downfall of the House of Yahweh and that the Waco Branch Davidian raids in 1993 were a warning to The House of Yahweh from the federal government, which he terms "the beast."[12] Similarly, Richard Butler, leader of the white supremacist group Aryan Nations, said the following when asked what might have motivated the day care shooting by Buford O. Furrow, Jr., one of his group's followers:

"There's a war against the white race. There's a war of extermination against the white male."[13]

The New World Order Conspiracy Theory and the Year 2000 Computer Bug

[14] Use of this term within militia circles became more common after President Bush starting using it to refer to the state of world affairs after the collapse of the USSR at the end of the Cold War and in the context of using international organizations to assist in governing international relations. The term **One World Government** is also used as a synonym for the New World Order.

Unlike religiously based terrorists, militia anxiety and paranoia specifically relating to the year 2000 are based mainly on a political ideology. Some militia members read significance into 2000 as it relates to their conception of the NWO conspiracy.[14] The NWO conspiracy theory holds that the United Nations (UN) will lead a military coup against the nations of the world to form a socialist or One World Government. UN troops, consisting mostly of foreign armies, will commence a military takeover of America. The UN will mainly use foreign troops on American soil because foreigners will have fewer reservations about killing American citizens. U.S. armed forces will not attempt to stop this invasion by UN troops and, in fact, the U.S. military may be "deputized" as a branch of the UN armed forces. The American military contingent overseas will also play a large part in this elaborate conspiracy theory, as they will be used to help conquer the rest of the world. The rationale for this part of the theory is that American soldiers will also have less qualms about killing foreigners, as opposed to killing their own citizens.

Under this hypothetical NWO/One World Government, the following events are to take place: 1) private property rights and private gun ownership will be abolished; 2) all national, state and local elections will become meaningless, since they will be controlled by the UN; 3) the U.S. Constitution will be supplanted by the UN charter; 4) only approved churches and other places of worship will be permitted to operate and will become appendages of the One World Religion, which will be the only legitimate doctrine of religious beliefs and ethical values; 5) home schooling will be outlawed and all school curriculum will need to be approved by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); and 6) American military bases and other federal facilities will be used as concentration camps by the UN to confine those patriots, including the militias, who defy the NWO. Other groups beside the UN that are often mentioned as being part of the NWO conspiracy theory are Jews, Communists, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Bilderbergers and the Trilateral Commission. Law enforcement officials will probably notice different versions of this theory, depending upon the source.

The NWO conspiracy theory is particularly relevant to the millennium because the year 2000 is considered to be a triggering device for the NWO due to the element of computer breakdown. Many computers around the world are based on a numerical system in which the year is only registered by the last two digits. A number of militia members accept the theory that on January 1, 2000, many computers will misinterpret this date as January 1, 1900, and malfunction and/or shut down completely. They further believe that these major computer malfunctions will cause widespread chaos at all levels of society – economic, social and political.

This chaos will theoretically create a situation in which American civilization will collapse, which will then produce an environment that the UN will exploit to forcibly take over the United States. Therefore, these militia members (as well as other groups) believe that the year 2000 will be the catalyst for the NWO.

15 James P. Wickstrom, "Intelligence Update," October 1998, accessed at www.posse~comitatus.org.
16 See Fall 1998 edition of the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Report, "Millennium Y2KAOS."
17 William Pierce, "The Millennium Bug and 'Mainstreaming' the News," accessed at www.natvan.com.

According to James Wickstrom, former leader of the defunct Posse Comitatus and "Minister" of the True Church of Israel, anyone who holds any powerful political influence knows that the Y2K crisis may be the final fuse that will lead to the NWO that "David Rockefeller and the rest of his satanic jew seedline desire to usher in upon the earth."[15] He claims that Jews have conspired to create the Y2K problem and that the prospect of impending computer failure is very real. Similarly, The New American, an organ of the ultraconservative John Birch Society, speculates that the Y2K bug could be America's Reichstag fire, a reference to the 1933 arson attack on Germany's Parliament building that was used by Hitler as an excuse to enact police state laws. Similar to this train of thought, Norm Olson, leader of the Northern Michigan Regional Militia, believes constitutional rights probably will be suspended before the real crisis hits. He states: "It will be the worst time for humanity since the Noahic flood."[16]

However, there are some extremists who do not attach any major significance to the Y2K problem. In his article, "The Millennium Bug and 'Mainstreaming' the News," William Pierce of the National Alliance tells his followers not to worry, or at least, not to worry very much about the Y2K issue. Pierce predicts that the main event that will occur on New Year's Day 2000 is that crazed millennialists will go "berserk when the Second Coming fails to occur." Also, "a few right-wing nuts may launch a premature attack on the government, figuring that without its computers the government won't be able to fight back." Pierce claims that the lights will remain on, and that airplanes will not fall from the sky. He says that he is able to make such a prediction with some degree of confidence because, "contrary to what some cranks would have you believe, the computer professionals and the government have been working on the Y2K problem for some time."[17]

Gun Control Laws

The passage of the Brady Bill and assault weapons ban in 1994 were interpreted by those in the militia movement and among the right-wing as the first steps towards disarming citizens in preparation for the UN-led NWO takeover. Some are convinced that the registration of gun owners is in preparation for a confiscation of firearms and eventually the arrest of the gun owners themselves. An article by Larry Pratt, Executive Director for Gun Owners of America, interprets a 1995 UN study of small arms, done reportedly in cooperation with U.S. police, customs and military services, as part of the UN's plan to take over the U.S. Pratt goes on to say that the "UN is increasingly assuming the jurisdictional authority of a federal world government with the U.S. as just one of scores of member states. And gun control – meaning civilian disarmament – is high up on the agenda of the UN."[18] Speculation like this only serves to fuel the already existing paranoia of militia and patriot groups.

[18] Larry Pratt, "The United Nations: Pressing for U.S. Gun Control," accessed at www.gunowners.org

The right-wing believes that many of the restrictions being placed on the ownership of firearms today mirror events in The Turner Diaries. In his book, Pierce writes about the United States government banning the private possession of firearms and staging gun raids in an effort to arrest gun owners. The book discusses the government/police use of black men, assigned as “special deputies” to carry out the gun raids. Many members of the right-wing movement view the book as prophetic, believing that it is only a matter of time before these events occur in real life.

In the aftermath of the school shootings in Littleton, Colorado, President Clinton, Congress, and Attorney General Reno acted swiftly to propose new laws aimed at restricting the sales of guns to juveniles and to close loopholes in existing laws. In May 1999, the Senate passed a bill to ban the importation of high capacity ammunition magazines and require background checks for guns sold at gun shows. In light of the enormous importance and prominent role that extremist groups place on the Second Amendment, it is probable that recent government actions aimed at controlling guns are perceived to be compelling signs of the UN-led NWO takeover.

19 There were 12 tribes of Israel but they were divided into two different kingdoms after the death of King Solomon.
The northern kingdom was called "Israel" and consisted of ten tribes and the southern kingdom was called "Judah" and was comprised of two tribes. There is a record of the two tribes making up the southern kingdom, but the ten northern tribes were "lost" after they were conquered around 722 BC by the Assyrians.
20 Jeffrey Kaplan, Radical Religion in America (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1997), p. 47-48.
21 Michael Barkun, Religion and the Racist Right (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), p. 60.

III. CHRISTIAN IDENTITY

Christian Identity is an ideology which asserts that the white Aryan race is God's chosen race and that whites comprise the ten lost tribes of Israel.[19] There is no single document that expresses this belief system. Adherents refer to the Bible to justify their racist ideals. Interpreting the Book of Genesis, Christian Identity followers assert that Adam was preceded by other, lesser races, identified as "the beasts of the field" (Gen. 1:25). Eve was seduced by the snake (Satan) and gave birth to two seed lines: Cain, the direct descendent of Satan and Eve, and Able, who was of good Aryan stock through Adam. Cain then became the progenitor of the Jews in his subsequent matings with the non-Adamic races. Christian Identity adherents believe the Jews are predisposed to carry on a conspiracy against the Adamic seed line and today have achieved almost complete control of the earth.[20] This is referred to as the two-seedline doctrine, which provides Christian Identity followers with a biblical justification for hatred.

The roots of the Christian Identity movement can be traced back to British-Israelism, the conviction that the British are the lineal descendants of the "ten lost tribes" of Israel. It is a belief that existed for some time before it became a movement in the second half of the 19th century.

The writings of John Wilson helped to extend the idea of British-Israelism to Anglo-Israelism, which included other Teutonic peoples – mostly northern European peoples from Germany, Italy, France and Switzerland. British-Israelism was brought to America in the early part of the 1920s, where it remained decentralized until the 1930s. At that time, the movement underwent the final transformation to become what we know as Christian Identity, at which time its ties to the original English movement were cut and it became distinctly American.

Wesley Swift is considered the single most significant figure in the early years of the Christian Identity movement in the United States. He popularized it in the right-wing by "combining British-Israelism, a demonic anti-Semitism, and political extremism."[21] He founded his own church in California in the mid 1940s where he could preach this ideology. In addition, he had a daily radio broadcast in California during the 1950s and 60s, through which he was able to proclaim his ideology to a large audience. With Swift's efforts, the message of his church spread, leading to the creation of similar churches throughout the country. In 1957, the name of his church was changed to The Church of Jesus Christ Christian, which is used today by Aryan Nations (AN) churches.

One of Swift's associates, William Potter Gale, was far more militant than Swift and brought a new element to Christian Identity churches. He became a leading figure in the anti-tax and paramilitary movements of the 1970s and 80s. There are numerous Christian Identity churches that preach similar messages and some espouse more violent rhetoric than others, but all hold fast to the belief that Aryans are God's chosen race.

Christian Identity also believes in the inevitability of the end of the world and the Second Coming of Christ. It is believed that these events are part of a cleansing process that is needed before Christ's kingdom can be established on earth. During this time, Jews and their allies will attempt to destroy the white race using any means available. The result will be a violent and bloody struggle – a war, in effect – between God's forces, the white race, and the forces of evil, the Jews and nonwhites. Significantly, many adherents believe that this will be tied into the coming of the new millennium.

The view of what Armageddon will be varies among Christian Identity believers. Some contend there will be a race war in which millions will die; others believe that the United Nations, backed by Jewish representatives of the anti-Christ, will take over the country and promote a New World Order. One Christian Identity interpretation is that white Christians have been chosen to watch for signs of the impending war in order to warn others. They are to then physically struggle with the forces of evil against sin and other violations of God's law (i.e., race-mixing and internationalism); many will perish, and some of God's chosen will be forced to wear the Mark of the Beast to participate in business and commerce. After the final battle is ended and God's kingdom is established on earth, only then will the Aryan people be recognized as the one and true Israel.

Christian Identity adherents believe that God will use his chosen race as his weapons to battle the forces of evil. Christian Identity followers believe they are among those chosen by God to wage this battle during Armageddon and they will be the last line of defense for the white race and Christian America. To prepare for these events, they engage in survivalist and paramilitary training, storing foodstuffs and supplies, and caching weapons and ammunition. They often reside on compounds located in remote areas.

As the millennium approaches, various right-wing groups pose a threat to American society. The radical right encompasses a vast number and variety of groups, such as survivalists, militias, the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, Christian Identity churches, the AN and skinheads. These groups are not mutually exclusive and within the subculture individuals easily migrate from one group to another. This intermixing of organizations makes it difficult to discern a singular religious ideology or belief system that encompasses the right-wing.

Nevertheless, Christian Identity is the most unifying theology for a number of these diverse groups and one widely adhered to by white supremacists. It is a belief system that provides its members with a religious asis for racism and an ideology that condones violence against non-Aryans. This doctrine allows believers to fuse religion with hate, conspiracy theories, and apocalyptic fear of the future.

Christian Identity-inspired millennialism has a distinctly racist tinge in the belief that Armageddon will be a race war of Aryans against Jews and nonwhites.

The potential difficulty society may face due to the Y2K computer glitch is considered by a number of Christian Identity adherents to be the perfect event upon which to instigate a race war.

There are a number of issues concerning the Christian Identity belief system that create problems when determining the threat level of groups. First, Christian Identity does not have a national organizational structure. Rather, it is a grouping of churches throughout the country which follows its basic ideology. Some of these churches can be as small as a dozen people, and some as large as the AN church, which claims membership in the thousands. In addition, some groups take the belief to a higher extreme and believe violence is the means to achieve their goal. This lack of structure creates a greater potential for violent actions by lone offenders and/or leaderless cells. It is important to note that only a small percentage of Christian Identity adherents believe that the new millennium will bring about a race war. However, those that do have a high propensity for violence.

Secondly, there are many factions of the right-wing, from Christian Identity to militias, all of which are intermingled in ideology and members. In some cases it is easy for a person to be a member of more than one group or to move from one to another. Often, if a member of one group believes the group is lax in its convictions, he or she will gravitate to a group that is more radical.

The third concern is the increased level of cooperation between the different groups. This trend can be seen throughout the right-wing. Christian Identity followers are pairing up with militias to receive paramilitary training and have also joined with members of the Ku Klux Klan and other right-wing groups. This cohesiveness creates an environment in which ideology can easily spread and branch out. However, it makes the job of law enforcement much more difficult as there are no distinctive borders between groups or ideology.

Lastly, the formation of splinter groups or state chapters from larger organizations presents an increased level of threat due to the likelihood that the leader has diminished control over the members and actions of the smaller groups. The AN is a large group that adheres to the Christian Identity belief system. The group espouses hatred toward Jews, the federal government, blacks and other minorities. The ultimate goal of the AN is to forcibly take five northwestern states – Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Washington and Montana – from the United States government in order to establish an Aryan homeland. It consists of a headquarters in Hayden Lake, Idaho, and a number of state chapters, which often act as their own entities. While the leader may not support or encourage acts of violence, it is easy for small cells of members or splinter groups to take part in violent acts without the knowledge of the leader. The individuals are associated with the group as a whole and carry the name of the group, but may perpetrate acts on their own.

These factors make a threat assessment concerning millennial violence difficult to determine. There is a moderate possibility of small factions of right-wing groups, whether they be members of the same group, or members of different groups, acting in an overtly violent manner in order to initiate the Apocalypse.

Several problems associated with the assessment for violence can be seen when looking at the structure and actions of the AN. The AN has been headquartered at Hayden Lake since the late 1970s and remains a focal point for the group's activities. Its annual World Congress attracts a number of different factions from the right-wing, including members and leaders of various right-wing groups. The World Congress is often viewed as a sort of round table to discuss right-wing issues. These meetings have led to an increased level of contact between AN members and members and leaders of other groups. This degree of networking within the right-wing may further the AN's base of support and help advance its cause.

One of the greatest threats posed by the right-wing in terms of millennial violence is the formation of a conglomeration of individuals that will work together to commit criminal acts. This has happened with some frequency in the past. Bob Mathews formed a subgroup of the AN, called The Order, which committed a number of violent crimes, including murder. Their mission was to bring about a race war and there are several groups that currently exist which hold these same beliefs. Dennis McGiffen, who also had ties to the AN, formed a cell called The New Order, based on Mathews' group. The members were arrested before they could follow through on their plans to try to start a race war. Chevie Kehoe, who was convicted of three homicides, conspiracy and interstate transportation of stolen property also spent some time at the AN compound. Most recently, Buford O. Furrow, Jr., the man accused of the August 10, 1999, shooting at the Jewish Community Center in Los Angeles, California, also spent some time at the AN compound working as a security guard.

A relatively new tenet gaining popularity among Christian Identity believers justifies the use of violence if it is perpetrated in order to punish violators of God's law, as found in the Bible and interpreted by Christian Identity ministers and adherents. This includes killing interracial couples, abortionists, prostitutes and homosexuals, burning pornography stores, and robbing banks and perpetrating frauds to undermine the "usury system." Christian Identity adherents engaging in such behavior are referred to as Phineas Priests or members of the Phineas Priesthood. This is a very appealing concept to Christian Identity's extremist members who believe they are being persecuted by the Jewish-controlled U.S. government and society and/or are eagerly preparing for Armageddon. Among adherents today, the Phineas Priesthood is viewed as a call to action or a badge of honor.

[22] Anti-Defamation League, Explosion of Hate, p 15.

IV. WHITE SUPREMACY

There are a number of white supremacy groups that do not necessarily adhere to Christian Identity or other religious doctrines. White supremacy groups such as the National Alliance, the American Nazi Party and the National Socialist White People's Party are largely politically, rather than religiously, motivated.

The National Alliance is probably best known for its leader, William Pierce, who is one of the most recognized names in the radical right. Pierce wrote The Turner Diaries and Hunter and hosts a weekly radio program, American Dissident Voices. Via these outlets, Pierce is able to provide his followers with an ideological and practical framework for committing violent acts.

The rhetoric of these groups largely shadows that of Adolf Hitler's in content and political ideology. In 1997, Pierce stated that:

> Ultimately we must separate ourselves from the Blacks and other non-whites and keep ourselves separate, no matter what it takes to accomplish this. We must do this not because we hate Blacks, but because we cannot survive if we remain mixed with them. And we cannot survive if we permit the Jews and the traitors among us to remain among us and to repeat their treachery. Eventually we must hunt them down and get rid of them.[22]

The end goal of National Socialist and Christian Identity devotees is the same: an all white nation. However, Christian Identity followers appear to be more of a threat concerning the millennium because of their religious beliefs.

There are also white supremacist groups which adhere to the general supremacist ideology, but are not political or religious in nature. For example, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) proposes racial segregation that is not generally based on religious ideals. The KKK is one of the most recognized white supremacist groups in the United States. Its history is expansive and its actions of cross burnings and rhetoric of hate are well known.

There is currently not a singular KKK group with a hierarchical structure, but many different KKK groups with a common ideology.

The KKK, as a whole, does not pose a significant threat with regard to the millennium. That is not to say that a member of the KKK will not act on his own or in concert with members of another group. Law enforcement has been very successful in infiltrating a number of these groups, thereby keeping abreast of their plans for action. The KKK also draws the attention of many watchdog groups, and the Southern Poverty Law Center produces a quarterly publication entitled "Klanwatch." It would be difficult for any of the known KKK groups to participate in millennial violence without law enforcement knowing.

[23] "U.S. Mulls Church Probe; Ties To Killings Investigated," Chicago Tribune, July 9, 1999.

[24] "Behind the Hate," The Washington Post, July 6, 1999.

Again, there is a great deal of movement that is possible throughout the right-wing, regardless of prior beliefs. If a member of a Christian Identity faction does not feel that his current group is taking enough violent action, it is possible for that member to move on to other ideologies or organizations such as Odinism, the World Church of the Creator (WCOTC) or the National Socialist movement. Because of this movement, it is also likely that communication exists between various factions of the right-wing, from religious groups to skinheads. Their end goals are similar.

The WCOTC presents a recent example of violence perpetrated by a white supremacist in order to bring about a race war. The major creed upon which Ben Klassen founded the religion is that one's race is his religion. Aside from this central belief, its ideology is similar to many Christian Identity groups in the conviction that there is a Jewish conspiracy in control of the federal government, international banking, and the media. They also dictate that RAHOWA, a racial holy war, is destined to ensue to rid the world of Jews and “mud races.” In the early 1990s, there was a dramatic increase in membership due to the growing belief in the Apocalypse and that RAHOWA was imminent.

In 1996, Matt Hale, who has come upon recent fame by being denied a license to practice law in Illinois, was appointed the new leader of the Church of the Creator. Hale made a number of changes to the group, including changing the name of the organization to the World Church of the Creator, giving it the feel of a widespread movement. As publicly reported, there is information to indicate that the WCOTC has violent plans for the millennium. Officials who searched Benjamin Smith's apartment, the man who went on a racially motivated killing spree over the 4th of July weekend, found a loose-leaf binder of handwritings. These writings described a holy war among the races and included a reference to the new millennium. Passages included plans of how white supremacists would shoot at non-whites from motor vehicles after the dawning of the new millennium.[23] While the group’s rhetoric does include the belief in a race war and the creation of an all white bastion within the United States, other than Smith's writings, there is no indication that it is linked to the millennium.

In addition, there have been recent incidents that have demonstrated the willingness of members to take part in violent action. WCOTC members in Southern Florida are thought to be tied to several racially motivated beatings. Within the last year, four Florida members were convicted for the pistol-whipping and robbery of a Jewish video store owner. They were supposedly trying to raise money for "the revolution."[24]

Finally, Odinism is another white supremacist ideology that lends itself to violence and has the potential to inspire its followers to violence in connection to the millennium. What makes Odinists dangerous is the fact that many believe in the necessity of becoming martyrs for their cause.

For example, Bob Mathews, the leader of The Order, died in a fiery confrontation with law enforcement. Also, William King relished the fact that he would receive the death penalty for his act of dragging James Byrd, Jr. to his death. Odinism has little to do with Christian Identity but there is one key similarity: Odinism provides dualism – as does Christian Identity – with regard to the universe being made up of worlds of light (white people) and worlds of dark (non-white people). The most fundamental difference between the two ideologies is that Odinists do not believe in Jesus Christ. However, there are enough similarities between the myths and legends of Odinism and the beliefs of Christian Identity to make a smooth transition from Christian Identity to Odinism for those racist individuals whose penchant for violence is not being satisfied.

25 Van Huizen lost re-election as commander of the MMCW in late 1997 to the more radical Joe Pilchak.

26 See "Militias ─ Initiating Contact," FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, July 1997, pp. 22-26.

V. MILITIAS

The majority of growth within the militia movement occurred during the 1990s. There is not a simple definition of how a group qualifies as a militia. However, the following general criteria can be used as a guideline: (1) a militia is a domestic organization with two or more members; (2) the organization must possess and use firearms; and (3) the organization must conduct or encourage paramilitary training. Other terms used to describe militias are Patriots and Minutemen.

Most militias engage in a variety of anti-government rhetoric. This discourse can range from the protesting of government policies to the advocating of violence and/or the overthrow of the federal government. However, the majority of militia groups are non-violent and only a small segment of the militias actually commit acts of violence to advance their political goals and beliefs. A number of militia leaders, such as Lynn Van Huizen of the Michigan Militia Corps – Wolverines, have gone to some effort to actively rid their ranks of radical members who are inclined to carry out acts of violence and/or terrorism.[25] Officials at the FBI Academy classify militia groups within four categories, ranging from moderate groups who do not engage in criminal activity to radical cells which commit violent acts of terrorism.[26] It should be clearly stated that the FBI only focuses on radical elements of the militia movement capable and willing to commit violence against government, law enforcement, civilian, military and international targets. In addition, any such investigation of these radical militia units must be conducted within strict legal parameters.

Militia anxiety and paranoia specifically relating to the year 2000 are based mainly on a political ideology, as opposed to religious beliefs. Many militia members believe that the year 2000 will lead to political and personal repression enforced by the United Nations and countenanced by a compliant U.S. government. This belief is commonly known as the New World Order (NWO) conspiracy theory (see Chapter I, Introduction). Other issues which have served as motivating factors for the militia movement include gun control, the incidents at Ruby Ridge (1992) and Waco (1993), the Montana Freemen Standoff (1996) and the restriction of land use by federal agencies.

One component of the NWO conspiracy theory – that of the use of American military bases by the UN – is worth exploring in further detail. Law enforcement officers, as well as military personnel, should be aware that the nation's armed forces have been the subject of a great deal of rumor and paranoia circulating among many militia groups. One can find numerous references in militia literature to military bases to be used as concentration camps in the NWO and visiting foreign military personnel conspiring to attack Americans.

[27] Accessed at www.eagleflt.com.

One example of this can be found on the website for the militia group United States Theatre Command (USTC).[27] The USTC website prominently features the NWO theory as it portrays both Camp Grayling in Michigan and Fort Dix in New Jersey as detention centers to be used to house prisoners in an upcoming war. Specifically in reference to a photograph of Camp Grayling, the USTC website states: "Note that the barbed wire is configured to keep people in, not out, and also note in the middle of the guard towers, a platform for the mounting of a machine gun." Specifically in reference to a photograph of Fort Dix, the USTC website states: "Actual photos of an 'Enemy Prisoner of War' camp in the United States of America! (Fort Dix, New Jersey to be exact!) Is there going to be a war here? Many more are suspected to be scattered throughout the United States."

Law enforcement personnel should be aware of the fact that the majority of militias are reactive, as opposed to proactive. Reactive militia groups are generally not a threat to law enforcement or the public. These militias may indeed believe that some type of NWO scenario may be imminent in the year 2000, but they are more inclined to sit back and wait for it to happen. They will stockpile their guns and ammunition and food, and wait for the government to curtail their liberties and take away their guns. When the expected NWO tragedy does not take place, these reactive militias will simply continue their current activities, most of which are relatively harmless. They will not overreact to minor disruptions of electricity, water and other public services.

However, there is a small percentage of the militia movement which may be more proactive and commit acts of domestic terrorism. As stated earlier, the main focus of the militias connected to the Y2K/millennium revolves around the NWO conspiracy theory. While the NOW is a paranoid theory, there may be some real technological problems arising from the year 2000.

Among these are malfunctioning computers, which control so many facets of our everyday lives. Any such computer malfunctions may adversely affect power stations and other critical infrastructure. If such breakdowns do occur, these may be interpreted as a sign by some of the militias that electricity is being shut off on purpose in order to create an environment of confusion.

In the paranoid rationalizations of these militia groups, this atmosphere of confusion can only be a prelude to the dreaded NWO/One World Government. These groups may then follow through on their premeditated plans of action.

[28] See Fall 1997 edition of the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Intelligence Report, “Rough Waters: Stream of Knowledge Probed by Officials.”

VI. BLACK HEBREW ISRAELITES

As the millennium approaches, radical fringe members of the Black Hebrew Israelite (BHI) movement may pose a challenge for law enforcement. As with the adherents of most apocalyptic philosophies, certain segments of the BHI movement have the potential to engage in violence at the turn of the century. This movement has been associated with extreme acts of violence in the recent past, and current intelligence from a variety of sources indicates that extreme factions of BHI groups are preparing for a race war to close the millennium.

Violent BHI followers can generally be described as proponents of an extreme form of black supremacy. Drawing upon the teachings of earlier BHI adherents, such groups hold that blacks represent God's true "chosen people," while condemning whites as incarnate manifestations of evil. As God's "authentic" Jews, BHI adherents believe that mainstream Jews are actually imposters. Such beliefs bear a striking resemblance to the Christian Identity theology practiced by many white supremacists. In fact, Tom Metzger, renowned white supremacist, once remarked, "They're the black counterpart of us."[28] Like their Christian Identity counterparts, militant BHI followers tend to see themselves as divinely endowed by God with superior status.

As a result, some followers of this belief system hold that violence, including murder, is justifiable in the eyes of God, provided that it helps to rid the world of evil. Violent BHI groups are of particular concern as the millennium approaches because they believe in the inevitability of a race war between blacks and whites.

The extreme elements of the BHI movement are prone to engage in violent activity. As seen in previous convictions of BHI followers, adherents of this philosophy have a proven history of violence, and several indications point toward a continuation of this trend. Some BHI followers have been observed in public donning primarily black clothing, with emblems and/or patches bearing the "Star of David" symbol. Some BHI members practice paramilitary operations and wear web belts and shoulder holsters. Some adherents have extensive criminal records for a variety of violations, including weapons charges, assault, drug trafficking, and fraud.

In law enforcement circles, BHI groups are typically associated with violence and criminal activity, largely as a result of the movement's popularization by Yahweh Ben Yahweh, formerly known as Hulon Mitchell, Jr., and the Miami-based Nation of Yahweh (NOY). In reality, the origins of the BHI movement are non-violent. While the BHI belief system may have roots in the United States as far back as the Civil War era, the movement became more recognized as a result of the teachings of an individual known as Ben Ami Ben Israel, a.k.a Ben Carter, from the south side of Chicago. Ben Israel claims to have had a vision at the age of 27, hearing "a voice tell me that the time had come for Africans in America, the descendants of the Biblical Israelites, to return to the land of our forefathers."

[29] Linda Jones. "Claiming a Promised Land: African-American settlers in Israel are guided by idea of independent Black Hebrew Society," The Dallas Morning News, July 27, 1997.
[30] Ibid.
[31] See Fall 1997 Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Report, "Rough Waters: Stream of Knowledge Probed by Officials."
[32] Jones, Dallas Morning News, July 27, 1997.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid. In fact, in the community of Dimona where the BHI community resides, the Dimona Police Chief spoke in complimentary terms as to the group's discipline, leadership, and integrity.

[29] Ben Israel persuaded a group of African-Americans to accompany him to Israel in 1967, teaching that African-Americans descended from the biblical tribe of Judah and, therefore, that Israel is the land of their birthright. Ben Israel and his followers initially settled in Liberia for the purposes of cleansing themselves of bad habits. In 1969, a small group of BHI followers left Liberia for Israel, with Ben Israel and the remaining original migrants arriving in Israel the following year. Public source estimates of the BHI community in Israel number between 1500 and 3000. [30] Despite promoting non-violence, members of Ben Israel's movement have shown a willingness to engage in criminal activity. For example, in 1986, Ben Israel and his top aide, Prince Asiel Ben Israel, were convicted of trafficking stolen passports and securities and forging checks and savings bonds.[31]

BHI in Israel are generally peaceful, if somewhat controversial. The FBI has no information to indicate that Ben Israel's BHI community in Israel is planning any activity – terrorist, criminal, or otherwise – inspired by the coming millennium. Ben Israel's claims to legitimate Judaism have at times caused consternation to the Israeli government. BHI adherents in Israel have apparently espoused anti-Semitic remarks, labeling Israeli Jews as "imposters."[32]

Neither the Israeli government nor the Orthodox rabbinate recognize the legitimacy of BHI claims to Judaism. According to Jewish law, an individual can be recognized as Jewish if he/she was born to a Jewish mother or if the individual agrees to convert to Judaism.[33] At present, BHI in Israel have legal status as temporary residents, which gives them the right to work and live in Israel, but not to vote. They are not considered to be Israeli citizens. While BHI claims to Judaism are disregarded by Israeli officials and religious leaders, the BHI community is tolerated and appears to be peaceful.[34]

While the BHI community in Israel is peaceful, BHI adherents in the United States became associated with violence thanks to the rise of the NOY, which reached the height of its popularity in the 1980s. The NOY was founded in 1979 and led by Yahweh Ben Yahweh. Ben Yahweh's followers viewed him as the Messiah, and therefore demonstrated unrequited and unquestioned obedience. Members of the organization engaged in numerous acts of violence in the 1980s, including several homicides, following direct orders from Ben Yahweh. Seventeen NOY members were indicted by a federal grand jury in Miami in 1990-91 on charges of RICO, RICO conspiracy, and various racketeering acts. Various members were convicted on RICO conspiracy charges and remain imprisoned.

While the overwhelming majority of BHI followers are unlikely to engage in violence, there are elements of this movement with both the motivation and the capability to engage in millennial violence. Some radical BHI adherents are clearly motivated by the conviction that the approach of the year 2000 brings society ever closer to a violent confrontation between blacks and whites. While the rhetoric professed by various BHI groups is fiery and threatening, there are no indications of explicitly identified targets for violence, beyond a general condemnation and demonization of whites and "imposter" Jews. Militant BHI groups tend to distrust the United States government; however, there are no specific indications of imminent violence toward the government.

35 Frederick C. Mish, ed., Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 10 th Edition (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, 1997), p. 282.

36 Margaret Thaler Singer and Janja Lalich, Cults in Our Midst: The Hidden Menace in Our Everyday Lives (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995), p. 7.

37 Singer and Lalich, p. 7.

38 Singer and Lalich, pp.8-9.

VII. APOCALYPTIC CULTS

For apocalyptic cults, especially biblically based ones, the millennium is viewed as the time that will signal a major transformation for the world. Many apocalyptic cults share the belief that the battle against Satan, as prophesied in the Book of Revelation, will begin in the years surrounding the millennium and that the federal government is an arm of Satan. Therefore, the millennium will bring about a battle between cult members – religious martyrs – and the government.

In the broadest meaning, cults are composed of individuals who demonstrate "great devotion to a person, idea, object or movement."[35] However, using that definition, many domestic terrorist groups could be characterized as cults, including Christian Identity churches, Black Hebrew Israelites, and some militias. For law enforcement purposes, a narrower interpretation of groups that qualify as cults is needed. A more useful definition of cults incorporates the term "cultic relationships" to describe the interactions within a cult.[36]

Specifically, a cultic relationship refers to "one in which a person intentionally induces others to become totally or nearly totally dependent on him or her for almost all major life decisions, and inculcates in these followers a belief that he or she has some special talent, gift, or knowledge."[37]

This definition of cults provides important distinctions that are vital for analyzing a cult's predilection towards violence. The origin of the cult, the role of its leader, and its uniqueness provide a framework for understanding what distinguishes cults from other domestic terrorist groups that otherwise share many similar characteristics. These distinctions are: (1) cult leaders are self-appointed, persuasive persons who claim to have a special mission in life or have special knowledge; (2) a cult's ideas and dogma claim to be innovative and exclusive; and (3) cult leaders focus their members' love, devotion and allegiance on themselves.[38] These characteristics culminate in a group structure that is frequently highly authoritarian in structure. Such a structure is a sharp contrast to the rapidly emerging trend among domestic terrorist groups towards a leaderless, non-authoritarian structure.

While predicting violence is extremely difficult and imprecise, there are certain characteristics that make some cults more prone to violence. Law enforcement officials should be aware of the following factors:

[39] Carl J. Jensen, III, Rod Gregg and Adam Szubin, "When a Cult Comes to Town," accessed from Law Enforcement Online.

• **Sequestered Groups**: Members of sequestered groups lose access to the outside world and information preventing critical evaluation of the ideas being espoused by the leader.

• **Leader's History**: The fantasies, dreams, plans, and ideas of the leader are most likely to become the beliefs of the followers because of the totalitarian and authoritarian nature of cults.

• **Psychopaths**: Control of a group by charismatic psychopaths or those with narcissistic character disorders.

• **Changes in the Leader**: Changes in a leader's personality caused by traumatic events such as death of a spouse or sickness.

• **Language of the Ideology**: Groups that are violent use language in their ideology that contains the seeds of violence.

• **Implied Directive for Violence**: Most frequently, a leader's speeches, rhetoric, and language does not explicitly call for violence, rather it is most often only implied.

• **Length of Time**: The longer the leader's behavior has gone unchecked against outside authority, the less vulnerable the leader feels.

• **Who Is in the Inner Circle**: Cults with violent tendencies often recruit people who are either familiar with weapons or who have military backgrounds to serve as enforcers.

Apocalyptic cults see their mission in two general ways: They either want to accelerate the end of time or take action to ensure that they survive the millennium. For example, Aum Shinrikyo wanted to take action to hasten the end of the world, while compounds in general are built to survive the endtime safely. An analysis of millennial cults by the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit describes how rhetoric changes depending on whether the leader's ideology envisions the group as playing an active role in the coming Apocalypse or a passive survivalist role: A cult that predicts that "God will punish" or "evil will be punished" indicates a more passive and less threatening posture than the cult that predicts that "God's chosen people will punish . . ."

As another example, the members of a passive group might predict that God or another being will one day liberate their souls from their bodies or come to carry them away. The followers of a more action-oriented group would, in contrast, predict that they themselves will one day shed their mortal bodies or transport themselves to another place.[39]

[40] Kevin M. Gilmartin, "The Lethal Triad: Understanding the Nature of Isolated Extremist Groups," accessed at www.leo.gov/tlib/leb/1996/sept961/txt.

[41] Carl J. Jensen, III and Yvonne Hsieh, "Law Enforcement and the Millennialist Vision: A Behavioral Approach," accessed from Law Enforcement Online.

[42] Ibid.

[43] B.A. Robinson in "Factors Commonly Found in Doomsday Cults," (www.religioustolerance.org/cultsign.htm.) dentifies traits that provide a framework for analyzing cults. They include the following: (1) The leader preaches end of the world/Armageddon in 2000 or within a reasonable time frame before and after 2000; (2) the cult expects to play a major, elite role at the end time; (3) the cult has large numbers of firearms, explosives or weapons of mass destruction; (4) the cult has prepared defensive structures; (5) the cult speaks of offensive action; (4) the cult is led by a single male charismatic leader; (5) the leader dominates the membership through physical, sexual and emotional control; (6) the cult is not an established denomination; (7) cult members live together in a community isolated from society; (8) extreme paranoia exists within the cult concerning monitoring by outsiders and government persecution; (9) and outsiders are distrusted, and disliked. These factors are designed to leave out cults that have unique end-time beliefs, but whose ideology does not include the advocacy of force or violence.

A cult that displays these characteristics may then produce three social-psychological components, referred to as the "Lethal Triad," that predispose a cult towards violence aimed at its members and/or outsiders.[40] Cults in which members are heavily dependent on the leader for all decision making almost always physically and psychologically isolate their members from outsiders, the first component of the triad.[41] The other two components interact in the following way:

"... **isolation** causes a reduction of critical thinking on the part of group members who become entrenched in the belief proposed by the group leadership. As a result, group members relinquish all responsibility for group decision making to their leader and blame the cause of all group grievances on some outside entity or force, a process known as projection.

Finally, isolation and **projection** combine to produce pathological **anger**, the final component of the triad."[42]

Of the nearly 1000 cults operating in the United States, very few present credible threats for millennial violence. Law enforcement officials should concentrate on those cults that advocate force or violence to achieve their goals concerning the endtime, as well as those cults which possess a substantial number of the distinguishing traits listed above.[43] In particular, cults of greatest concern to law enforcement are those that: (1) believe they play a special, elite role in the endtime; (2) believe violent offensive action is needed to fulfill their endtime prophecy; (3) take steps to attain their beliefs. Those factors may culminate in plans to initiate conflict with outsiders or law enforcement.

The violent tendencies of dangerous cults can be classified into two general categories – defensive violence and offensive violence. Defensive violence is utilized by cults to defend compound or enclave that was created specifically to eliminate most contact with the dominant culture.[44]

44 Jeffrey Kaplan, Radical Religion in America, p.57.
45 Ibid., p.165.
46 Lisa Beyer, "Target: Jerusalem," Time Magazine, January 18, 1999.

The 1993 clash in Waco, Texas at the Branch Davidian complex is an illustration of such defensive violence. History has shown that groups that seek to withdraw from the dominant culture seldom act on their beliefs that the endtime has come unless provoked.[45]

Cults with an apocalyptic agenda, particularly those that appear ready to initiate rather than anticipate violent confrontations to bring about Armageddon or fulfill "prophesy" present unique challenges to law enforcement officials. One example of this type of group is the Concerned Christians (CC). Monte Kim Miller, the CC leader, claims to be one of the two witnesses or prophets described in the Book of Revelation who will die on the streets of Jerusalem prior to the second coming of Christ. To attain that result, members of the CC traveled to Israel in 1998 in the belief that Miller will be killed in a violent confrontation in the streets of Jerusalem in December 1999. CC members believe that Miller's death will set off an apocalyptic end to the millennium, at which time all of Miller's followers will be sent to Heaven. Miller has convinced his followers that America is “Babylon the Great” referred to in the Book of Revelation. In early October 1998, CC members suddenly vanished from the United States, an apparent response to one of Miller’s “prophesies” that Denver would be destroyed on October 10, 1998. In January 1999, fourteen members of the group who had moved to Jerusalem were deported by the Israeli government on the grounds that they were preparing to hasten the fulfillment of Miller’s prophecies by instigating violence.[46]

Ascertaining the intentions of such cults is a daunting endeavor, particularly since the agenda or plan of a cult is often at the whim of its leader. Law enforcement personnel should become well acquainted with the previously mentioned indicators of potential cult violence in order to separate the violent from the non-violent.

[47] Arabs refer to this site as Haram al-Sharif, which is Arabic for "Noble Sanctuary." Israelis refer to it as Har HaBayit, which is Hebrew for "Temple Mount." American news organizations almost always refer to it as the Temple Mount.

Therefore, for the sake of simplicity and continuity, the term Temple Mount will be used in this report when referring to this section of Jerusalem.

VIII. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JERUSALEM

The city of Jerusalem, cherished by Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike, faces many serious challenges as the year 2000 approaches. As already evidenced by the deportation of various members of the religious cult known as the Concerned Christians, zealotry from all three major monotheistic religions is particularly acute in Israel, where holy shrines, temples, churches, and mosques are located. While events surrounding the millennium in Jerusalem are much more problematic for the Israeli government than for the United States, the potential for violent acts in Jerusalem will cause reverberations around the world, including the United States. The extreme terrorist fringes of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are all present in the United States.

Thus, millennial violence in Jerusalem could conceivably lead to violence in the United States as well. Within Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, or Haram al-Sharif, holds a special significance for both Muslims and Jews.[47] The Temple Mount houses the third holiest of all Islamic sites, the Dome of the Rock. Muslims believe that the prophet Muhammad ascended to Heaven from a slab of stone – the "Rock of Foundation"– located in the center of what is now the Dome of the Rock. In addition, when Arab armies conquered Jerusalem in 638 A.D., the Caliph Omar built the al-Aqsa Mosque facing the Dome of the Rock on the opposite end of the Temple Mount. The Western (or Wailing) Wall, the last remnant of the second Jewish temple that the Romans destroyed in 70 A.D., stands at the western base of the Temple Mount. The Western Wall has long been a favorite pilgrimage site for Jews, and religious men and women pray there on a daily basis. Thus, the Temple Mount is equally revered by Jews as the site upon which the first and second Jewish Temples stood.

Israeli officials are extremely concerned that the Temple Mount, an area already seething with tension and distrust among Jews and Muslims, will be the stage for violent encounters between religious zealots. Most troubling is the fact that an act of terrorism need not be the catalyst that sparks widespread violence. Indeed, a simple symbolic act of desecration, or even perceived desecration, of any of the holy sites on the Temple Mount is likely to trigger a violent reaction. For example, the Islamic holy month of Ramadan is expected to coincide with the arrival of the year 2000. Thus, even minor provocations on or near the Temple Mount may provide the impetus for a violent confrontation.

The implications of pilgrimages to Jerusalem by vast numbers of tourists are ominous, particularly since such pilgrimages are likely to include millennial or apocalyptic cults on a mission to hasten the arrival of the Messiah. There is general concern among Israeli officials that Jewish and Islamic extremists may react violently to the influx of Christians, particularly near the Temple Mount. The primary concern is that extreme millennial cults will engage in proactive violence designed to hasten the second coming of Christ.

Perhaps the most likely scenario involves an attack on the Al-Aqsa Mosque or the Dome of the Rock. Some millennial cults hold that these structures must be destroyed so that the Jewish Temple can be rebuilt, which they see as a prerequisite for the return of the Messiah.

Additionally, several religious cults have already made inroads into Israel, apparently in preparation for what

they believe to be the endtimes.

It is beyond the scope of this document to assess the potential repercussions from an attack on Jewish or Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem. It goes without saying, however, that an attack on the Dome of the Rock or the Al-Aqsa Mosque would have serious implications. In segments of the Islamic world, close political and cultural ties between Israel and the United States are often perceived as symbolic of anti-Islamic policies by the Western world. Attacks on Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem, particularly by Christian or Jewish extremists, are likely to be perceived by Islamic extremists as attacks on Islam itself. Finally, the possibility exists that Islamic extremist groups will capitalize upon the huge influx of foreigners into Jerusalem and engage in a symbolic attack.

IX. CONCLUSION

Extremists from various ideological perspectives attach significance to the arrival of the year 2000, and there are some signs of preparations for violence. The significance of the new millennium is based primarily upon either religious beliefs relating to the Apocalypse/Armageddon, or political beliefs relating to the New World Order conspiracy theory.

The challenge to law enforcement is to understand these extremist theories and, if any incidents do occur, be prepared to respond to the unique crises they will represent. Law enforcement officials should be particularly aware that the new millennium may increase the odds that extremists may engage in proactive violence specifically targeting law enforcement officers. Religiously motivated extremists may initiate violent conflicts with law enforcement officials in an attempt to facilitate the onset of Armageddon, or to help fulfill a "prophesy." For many on the extreme right-wing, the battle of Armageddon is interpreted as a race war to be fought between Aryans and the "satanic" Jews and their allies. Likewise, extremists who are convinced that the millennium will lead to a One World Government may choose to engage in violence to prevent such a situation from occurring. In either case, extremists motivated by the millennium could choose martyrdom when approached or confronted by law enforcement officers. Thus, law enforcement officials should be alert for the following:

1) plans to initiate conflict with law enforcement;
2) the potential increase in the number of extremists willing to become martyrs; and
3) the potential for a quicker escalation of conflict during routine law enforcement activities (e.g. traffic stops, issuance of warrants, etc.).

END OF REPORT
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